

**REPORT - PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**October 28, 2004**

**Project Name and Number:** Irvington Draft Concept Plan (PLN2001-00315)

**Applicant:** City of Fremont

**Proposal:** Adoption of a vision and long-range plan for the core area of the Irvington District

**Recommended Action:** Recommend approval to the City Council

**Location:** Irvington Planning Area (See Figure I-2 of the Concept Plan)

**Consultant(s):** Design, Community & Environment – lead consultant  
Bay Area Economics – economic consultant  
Fehr & Peers – traffic consultant

**Environmental Review:** A Negative Declaration has been prepared and circulated for the proposed project.

**Existing General Plan:** Community Commercial Center, Light Industrial, Public Facility and various Residential Designations (see Figure 1-1 of the Concept Plan).

**Existing Zoning:** Community Commercial (Irvington Overlay), Light Industrial, Public Facility and various Residential designations (see Figure 1-2 of the Concept Plan).

**Existing Land Use:** Primarily commercial, light industrial and housing (see Figure 1-3 of the Concept Plan)

**Public Hearing Notice:** A total of 486 notices were mailed to owners and occupants of property within the Irvington Concept Plan area. The notices to owners and occupants were mailed on October 15, 2004. A Public Hearing Notice was delivered to The Argus on October 11, 2004 to be published by October 14, 2004. In addition, an advertisement was printed in the Argus on October 7, 2004 providing notice of intent with regard to adoption of a Negative Declaration.

**Executive Summary:** In January 2000, staff began work on the Irvington Concept Plan, a long range plan to revitalize the core area in the Irvington District. A draft Plan was prepared and sent through the review process in late 2002 and early 2003. During this process several comments were received and the City Council sent the Plan back for further refinement. Since that time staff and an Ad Hoc Committee of Irvington residents and business owners have met to review and revise the Plan. In addition, the revised Plan was presented to the public at a community meeting, the Irvington Business Association and to the Historical Architectural Review Board. Comments from all of these meetings formed the basis for the current Public Review Draft of the Irvington Concept Plan (Plan). The entire Plan is available for review at [www.fremont.gov](http://www.fremont.gov) (Planning Division page).

The current version of the Plan envisions a pedestrian-oriented retail spine along Bay Street consistent with the recently adopted Planned District zoning for that area. The Plan also envisions a higher density and intensity of development around a future potential BART station as well as mixed-use development and higher density residential development in areas along Fremont and Grimmer Boulevards. A new vision has been developed for Main Street. The goal of the vision is to link the Bay Street retail core with a future potential BART station. To achieve this vision, the Plan now recommends that Main Street be allowed to be developed with residential buildings but that retail and other commercial office and service uses be allowed but not required on the ground floor of those buildings.

The Plan also includes revised and enhanced Design Guidelines that are geared to achieving the overall vision. Finally, the Plan reflects changes in circumstances since the 2002 Irvington Concept Plan was before the Commission.

**Background and Previous Actions:** In April, 2000 the City Council directed staff to prepare a Concept Plan for the core of the Irvington District, with the understanding that the project would begin in spring of 2001. The Irvington Concept Plan is a long-range plan with emphasis on revitalization of the central core area. It addresses urban design, land uses, circulation, parking, historic preservation, economic development, market feasibility and implementation strategies. An urban design plan was prepared for the Irvington District in 1987. It recommended certain improvements to the community, many of which have been implemented in the past 17 years, including the Irvington entry signage and streetscape improvements at the Five Corners Intersection. The Irvington Concept Plan expands upon that previous urban design plan, taking into consideration a number of pending public projects in the Irvington district that present new opportunities.

Design, Community & Environment (DC&E) was selected to lead the planning process. The consultant team also includes Bay Area Economics as the economic consultant and Fehr & Peers as the traffic consultant. In addition to City staff and the consultant team, the Irvington community members are active partners in the planning process, participating in a series of community workshops and ad-hoc meetings.

While a number of community meetings were held throughout the process, there were several changes and amendments proposed to the plan as a whole, but in particular, to the proposed Design Guidelines. Several community members expressed concern over the changes and in spring of 2003 the City Council directed that the Plan be reevaluated to address these concerns.

Over the past year, staff has been meeting with an Ad Hoc Committee of citizens from Irvington to review and refine the Plan (including an evaluation of the Planning Commission's 2003 recommendations to the City Council). A revised Plan was then developed (April 2004) and that Plan was reviewed by HARB and the public at a community meeting held in June of 2004. Since then, staff and the consultant have worked with the Ad Hoc Committee to further refine the Concept Plan. The current Public Review Draft of the Irvington Concept Plan (October 2004) is the result of the review process to date.

#### **PLAN OVERVIEW/PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The plan is organized into the following chapters:

- 1 Existing Conditions
- 2 Plan Vision and Goals
- 3 Development Concepts
- 4 Design Guidelines
- 5 Plan Implementation

The following summary highlights the content of the various chapters and, in particular the changes in the Plan since the 2002 draft was considered by the Planning Commission and City Council.

**Existing Conditions (Chapter 1):** This chapter has been updated to reflect changes in circumstances since the prior draft. For instance, the General Plan and zoning maps have been updated to reflect changes that have occurred. Economic/Market conditions section has also been updated to reflect early 2004 conditions.

**Plan Vision and Goals (Chapter 2):** In essence the Plan begins with Chapter 2, Vision and Goals. Two new goals (3 and 12) were added to strengthen the Plan's focus on the preservation and enhancement of Irvington's commercial core. These goals were primarily added as a result of the added potential for housing. Housing became a focus for the City over the past several years with the advent of the new Housing Element, creation of a new mixed-use ordinance and the desire to revitalize and encourage investment in the City's Redevelopment areas. The Ad Hoc Committee felt that the housing goals, while important, needed to be balanced with strong retail/commercial goals that would assure that Irvington maintains a strong commercial presence.

### Concept Plan Goals

- Goal 1: Develop an identity for Irvington that reflects Irvington's history and distinguishes it from other Fremont districts.
- Goal 2: Improve the overall appearance of the neighborhood and commercial district.
- Goal 3: Protect and enhance Irvington as one of Fremont's key commercial centers.
- Goal 4: Encourage revitalization of underutilized parcels and buildings, including historic buildings and neighborhood features.
- Goal 5: Attract unique shopping, dining and neighborhood services to Irvington.
- Goal 6: Provide an integrated, safe and well-designed pedestrian and bicycle network, including access to Laguna Creek, Central Park and other recreational amenities.
- Goal 7: Minimize the impact of through-traffic to the degree feasible while meeting circulation needs.
- Goal 8: Improve streetscape design in Irvington.
- Goal 9: Develop parking facilities that meet commercial and residential needs.
- Goal 10: Improve bus service and scheduling to match the needs of Irvington residents.
- Goal 11: Integrate the potential future BART station and accompanying residential and commercial development into Irvington.
- Goal 12: Add housing to central Irvington in a way that respects Irvington's role as one Fremont's important commercial cores.

**Overview of Development Concepts (Chapter 3):** The Plan divides the Irvington area into several focus areas. It is important to note that the current Plan still assumes certain major changes (listed below) will occur in Irvington over the next few years, namely:

- Commencement of the Washington Grade Separation including modification to the location of railroad tracks, revised circulation on some adjacent streets and raising Driscoll/Osgood Road to intersect with Washington Boulevard.
- Washington Boulevard Street Improvements
- Fremont Boulevard Street Improvements (south of Washington Boulevard)
- Osgood Road Street Improvements
- Utility undergrounding on Bay Street, Fremont Boulevard and Washington Boulevard
- Roberts Avenue sidewalks
- Revitalization of the Patio World portion of the Tri-City site on Grimmer Boulevard

The following section briefly describes the key development concepts (and changes to those concepts) for each of the focus areas. The focus areas are graphically identified on Figure 3-3, page 25 of the Concept Plan.

- A. Bay Street/Monument Center** (pages 26-31). The plan has been amended to include specific references to the *Bay Street Schematic Design Concept* prepared by RRM Design Group. The current Plan does not contain the final version adopted by the City Council, however the final Plan will be incorporated into the document. The final plan has been attached to the Errata sheet. For the Monument Center area, a series of alternatives have been developed to illustrate some of the potential options to revitalize the area.

- B. Washington/Main Triangle** (pages 32-35). The Ad Hoc Committee has recommended and the Plan reflects that the focus for the majority of Main Street may in fact be residential rather than retail/commercial. Retail/commercial presence is, however, maintained along Washington Boulevard frontage. The Plan envisions the redevelopment of block bound by Washington Boulevard, Union Street, Main Street and Roberts Avenue. It includes a "Destination Building" on the corner of Washington Boulevard and Union Street, a rehabilitation of the existing 1920s-era theater building, some new commercial and/or mixed use buildings and a shared parking lot on the interior of the block.
- C. Main Street** (pages 35-42). Again, the Ad Hoc Committee has recommended and the Plan reflects that the focus for the majority of Main Street may in fact be residential rather than retail/commercial. Because of the grade separation and future potential BART Station, Main Street is proposed as being completely transformed over the next 20 years to become "main street": a pedestrian-oriented street, linking the heart of Irvington from the five corners to the potential BART Station. The grade separation calls for Main Street to be extended under Washington Boulevard to connect to the potential BART Station. The plan calls for as much as three story mixed use transit-oriented development with potential ground floor retail-commercial with offices or residential above. The illustrative plan (page 36) also now recognizes that while the Union Pacific railroad alignment will be changed, utility easements will remain and buildings will not be allowed over the utility easements. The plan now shows a "pedestrian passage" in this area.
- D. BART** (pages 43-44). The proposed conceptual design for a potential Irvington BART station is intended to allow access from both sides of the station and to differentiate between more neighborhood serving access (from the west side, largely off Main and Roberts) and broader access from the east side off Osgood. In addition, HARB noted that the Gallegos Winery ruins off of Osgood Road (currently owned by BART) are designated as a Primary Historic Resource. HARB recommended and the Plan now contains language (page 44) that encourages that visual access to the ruins be retained as part of the future improvements to the site and that the ruins be protected from further vandalism.
- E. Railroad Parcels** (pages 45-46). As a result of the grade separation, the existing dual railroads will be moved to one track immediately adjacent to the future BART track. This will allow for better access and integration into the community of a swath of land currently isolated between railroad tracks. The plan calls for transit oriented residential development closer to the potential BART Station, with lower densities as you move further from the station. The plan also calls for a trail connection between Central Park and the potential BART Station. The Plan has been amended to exclude an alternative land use concept because it has been recognized that existing utilities will remain in the former Union Pacific railroad alignment making the other alternative infeasible. HARB also noted that the trail planned to link Irvington with Central Park could be come a segment of the Juan Bautista de Anza Trail. Apparently, there is some historical documentation which indicates that the trail traversed the area easterly of the lagoons in Central Park. HARB noted that this could present some signage opportunities and should also be listed as a Catalyst Project. HARB further noted that the Plan needs to show a bridge over Paseo Padre Parkway to link with Central Park. Figure 3-20 on page 46 has been amended to show this linkage.
- F. Grimmer South** (page 47). This underutilized area is seen as transitioning over time into higher density residential use, with the potential for some mixed use. The plan has been amended to reflect recently approved General Plan Land Use Amendments and rezoning activity.
- G. Grimmer North** (pages 48-49). This new section is the result of the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation that this area of Irvington contains a significant opportunity to revitalize Grimmer Boulevard and establish a multi-use pathway between Paseo Padre Parkway and Fremont Boulevard. The Ad Hoc Committee also suggested and HARB supported the recognition of the infill development around the Hiram-Davis home. The Plan reflects this and calls for new infill development to further reinforce the character of existing streets in the neighborhood.
- H. Fremont Boulevard** (page 50). This underutilized area along Fremont Boulevard is also seen as intensifying over time, with new commercial and perhaps residential or mixed use development in portions of the area. Minor changes have been made to this section to reflect recent project approvals and possible alternative development opportunities.

**Design Guidelines (Chapter 4):** The Design Guidelines were a major focus of the updated Plan. Prior to City Council review of the October 2002 draft, the Planning Commission considered the Plan and suggested additions and modifications, primarily to the Design Guidelines. The community felt that there were several changes and that they had not had time to consider and review these changes. As a result, the City Council returned the former Concept Plan for additional review and consideration by the community.

The Ad Hoc Committee, staff and the consultant held several meetings to review the Design Guidelines and suggestions made by the Commission. Most of those suggestions were accepted and a few additional design concepts were refined. HARB considered the revised Guidelines and suggested the following additional changes (all of which have been incorporated into the current Plan:

pg 57, a	Illustration on Building Facades. Show buildings of varying heights.
pg 58, b	Allow bay window projections on second floors over the right-of-way where approved by the City Engineer. Staff is recommending that this language be changed to read "Allow awnings over the right-of-way where approved by the City Engineer." in that permanent structures cannot effectively be removed in the event the right-of-way requires improvements.
pg 81, e	Parking Pavement Surfaces. Based upon recent experience with Bill Ball Plaza in Centerville and the recent review of the Bay Street project proposal, HARB recommended that the durability and maintenance of the pavement materials be considered carefully.
pg 84	Added the Grimmer Residence to the list of Primary Historic Resources. Both HARB and Planning Commission had previously recommended this property be added to the list of Primary Historic Resources and the City Council recently approved the addition.
pg 84	Noted that the guidelines for Primary Historic Resource structures are based upon the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (eliminating reference to the 1977 standards).
Throughout	HARB noted that the organization of the Design Guidelines could be improved with subheadings on each page indicating which section (Pedestrian-Oriented Streets or Major Streets) you were within.

With the refinements to the Design Guidelines that have occurred, it is currently envisioned that the Guidelines contained within the current Plan document will be adopted concurrent with the Irvington Concept Plan. These new guidelines will supersede the 1993 Guidelines to avoid any possible conflict and to ensure that new development fosters the Plan goals and vision. Staff is recommending that the final Plan include a "statement of applicability". The purpose of the statement will be to clarify that the Design Guidelines will only be applicable when appropriate land use and zoning changes have been made to effectuate the use of the guidelines.

**Plan Implementation (Chapter 5):** The Implementation Chapter has been updated to reflect the current status of implementation projects and indicate the anticipated timeframe for projects, namely: "near, midterm and long-term" projects. A new map (Figure 5-1 Catalyst Projects) has been added to show the general location of projects.

### **Project Analysis:**

- **General Plan Conformance:** Most of the core area covered by the Concept Plan is designated *Community Commercial* under the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Much of the area is also covered by an Irvington Overlay District. The proposed project is largely consistent with the intent of the existing General Plan which calls for encouraging the revitalization of the commercial core of Irvington, taking an active role in reviewing the potential BART station design plans to integrate the potential BART station into the community, and refining the land use plan "to foster economic vitality and a focused, pedestrian oriented commercial center." A few of the relevant General Plan policies are:

LU 2.14: A Community Commercial Center ("CCC") should be a pedestrian oriented commercial environment. To maintain an active pedestrian environment, buildings oriented towards sidewalks or public plazas and walkways shall be strongly encouraged. Retail uses shall be encouraged at the ground level.

Analysis: The Design Guidelines contained in the Plan "facilitate a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment for residents and patrons of commercial establishments."

LU 2.16: Development of the CCC should be guided by a design and development plan. The plan should assess the appropriate area needed for commercial uses and recommend alternative uses (including mixed use) for areas outside the identified commercial center. The plan should also identify parking strategies for the commercial area as a whole so as to foster a pedestrian oriented shopping environment. The plan should address historic preservation and design guidelines for each CCC.

Analysis: The Plan serves as a design and development plan, and recommends modified land uses and alternative uses (including mixed use). The plan deals with parking issues to foster a pedestrian-oriented retail area, and includes historic preservation principles and design guidelines.

LU 2.17: Each of the four historic commercial centers shall be oriented toward pedestrians to the degree feasible. New development should strengthen the "Main Street" character of these areas.

Analysis: The Plan reflects this policy in its efforts to improve streetscape design and lay out design guidelines for specific pedestrian-oriented streets.

LU 1: New housing development while conserving the character of the City's existing single family residential neighborhoods.

Analysis: The Plan identifies several opportunities for new housing development, including in the area between the railroad tracks which are currently designated for light industrial use, and in portions of the Community Commercial area, which could increase housing production while conserving the existing single family residential neighborhoods.

While the Plan implements the overall vision identified for Irvington in the General Plan, some specific language and land use designations in the General Plan would need to be modified to implement the Concept Plan. As noted earlier, the Plan sets forth a vision and recommends some specific changes, but is not self-implementing. These recommended changes to the General Plan are follow-on actions that require separate action by the City Council. For example, the aforementioned Light Industrial area between the railroad tracks would need to be redesignated for residential use.

**Redevelopment Plan Conformance:** The Plan conforms to the Irvington Redevelopment Plan, which has as three of its general goals:

- the elimination of adverse physical and economic conditions within the Project Area;
- the enhancement of the historic business district in Irvington, including the attraction and retention of neighborhood serving commercial facilities, and the attraction of restaurants and specialty retail uses to make Irvington a destination point for workers in the industrial and other areas of Fremont; and
- the creation of residential opportunities for various segments of the community, including the provision of quality affordable housing within and outside the Project Area, as required by the Redevelopment Law.

- **Zoning Regulations:** The Plan recommends modifications in the Zoning Ordinance to bring the Zoning Ordinance more in conformance with its approach. However, the Plan itself makes no changes in zoning. An example of the types of changes foreseen by the prior draft of the Concept Plan was the adoption of a Planned District zone for Bay Street. Additional, Planned District zones will likely be developed for Main Street and the area easterly of the current Union Pacific rail line. These changes will be follow-up implementation actions that should be considered and adopted over the next year.
- **Parking:** The Plan recommends modifications to parking requirements (for example, Bay Street). Additional opportunities to create parking should be implemented at a later date; however, the Plan itself makes no changes in existing requirements.

- **Open Space/Landscaping:** The Plan highlights opportunities to improve landscaping in the area and develop usable open spaces. The plaza at the Washington / Union Triangle and the multipurpose path in the Railroad Parcel are two examples. However, the Plan is not a proposal to modify or improve open space and landscaping. Such proposals would be independently evaluated if and when they are submitted.
- **Circulation/Access Analysis:** The Plan suggests new circulation patterns connected with the potential Irvington BART Station and the Washington Boulevard Grade Separation. In some of the Development Concepts, new access points for hypothetical project are suggested, too. However, the Plan is not a proposal to modify circulation or access for or around any property. Such proposals would be independently evaluated if and when they are submitted. Similarly, any impacts on traffic that would result from any rezoning or General Plan Amendments (GPA) would be evaluated at the time of the GPA or rezoning.

**HARB Comments:** In June of 2003, HARB considered the project and was supportive of the Ad Hoc Committee and staff recommendations. HARB's comments have been noted throughout this report and their recommendations have been incorporated into the current Plan document.

**Environmental Analysis:** A revised Initial Study and Draft Negative Declaration have been prepared for this project. The proposed Irvington Concept Plan is a planning tool which sets forth a more precise statement of the community's vision for the future of the Irvington District, and a set of possible tools for achieving that vision. The Concept Plan is for an already developed portion of the City. The Plan should have no significant impact on habitat or sensitive environments. The scale and intensity of development guided by the Concept Plan is generally consistent with that already contemplated under the General Plan, with the exception of possible housing development on former industrially designated lands. Adoption of the Concept Plan will not in itself allow housing development, but the Plan does recommend modifying current regulations to allow housing in certain areas where it is not currently allowed. A General Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendment would be required to allow housing development, and any specific proposal for housing would be subject to analysis of environmental impacts. Any change in the zoning ordinance or any new project would be subject to environmental review. Therefore, adoption of the Concept Plan in itself should have no cumulative or other significant impacts.

The initial study conducted for the project has evaluated the potential for this project to cause an adverse effect -- either individually or cumulatively -- on wildlife resources. There is no evidence the proposed project would have any potential for adverse effect on wildlife resources. Based on this finding, a Certificate of Fee Exemption will be submitted with the Notice of Determination after project approval, as required by Public Resources Code section 21089. The Certificate of Fee Exemption allows the project to be exempted from the review fee and environmental review by the California Department of Fish and Game.

**Response from Agencies and Organizations:** No new comments have been received regarding the current draft of the Irvington Concept Plan as of the writing of this staff report.

#### **Enclosures:**

- Public Review Draft Irvington Concept Plan (October 2004) including Errata Sheet
- HARB minutes from June 2004
- City Council minutes from March 2003
- Planning Commission Minutes from October 2002
- Revised Initial Study and Draft Negative Declaration

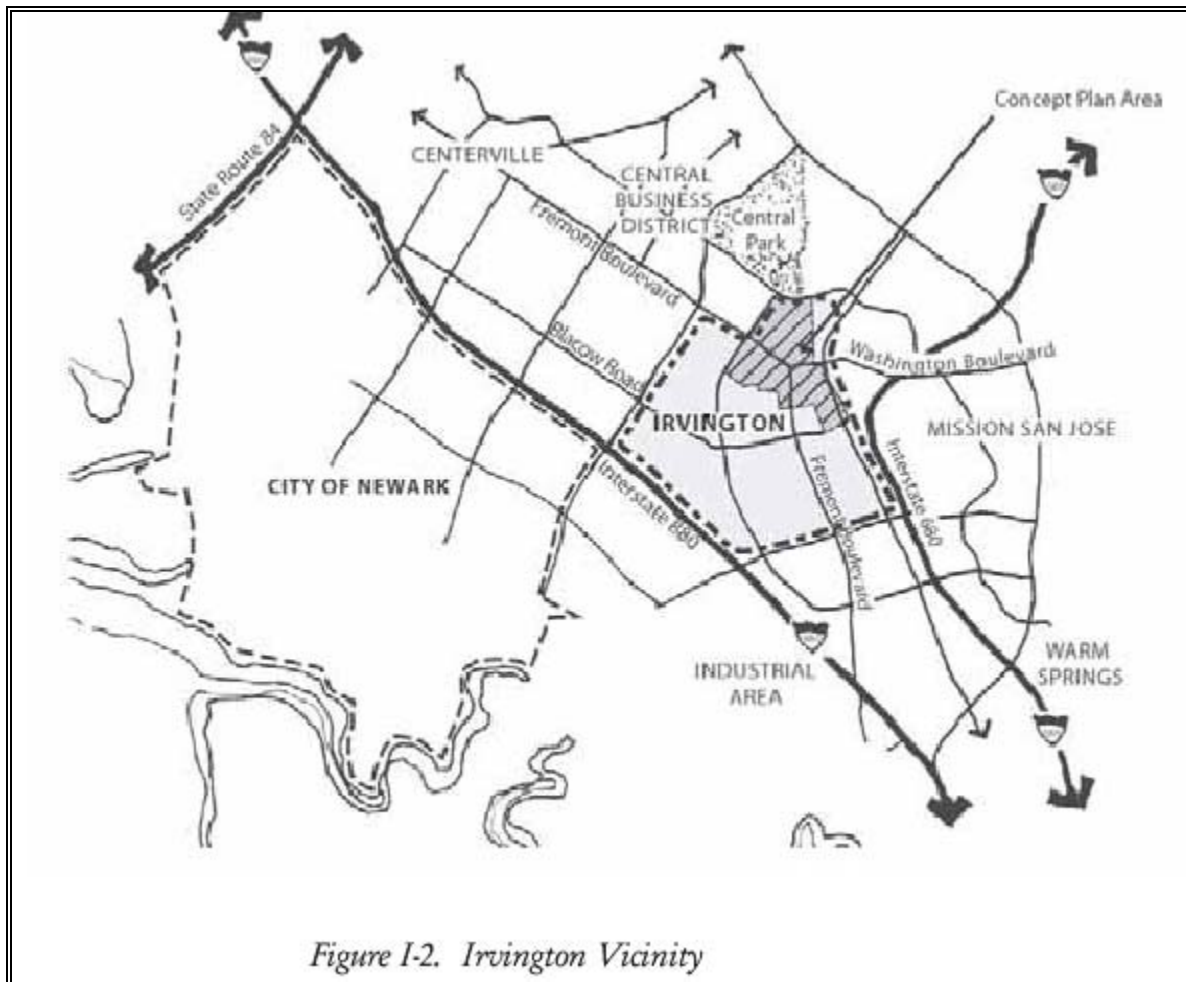
#### **Exhibits:**

- Exhibit "A"      Public Review Draft Irvington Concept Plan (October 2004) including Errata Sheet

**Recommended Actions:**

1. Hold public hearing.
2. Recommend the City Council find the initial study has evaluated the potential for this project to cause an adverse effect -- either individually or cumulatively -- on wildlife resources. There is no evidence the proposed project would have any potential for adverse effect on wildlife resources.
3. Recommend the City Council approve draft Negative Declaration with accompanying Certificate of Fee Exemption and find it reflects the independent judgment of the City of Fremont.
4. Recommend to Council approval of the Irvington Concept Plan (Exhibit "A") and forward specific recommendations, if any.





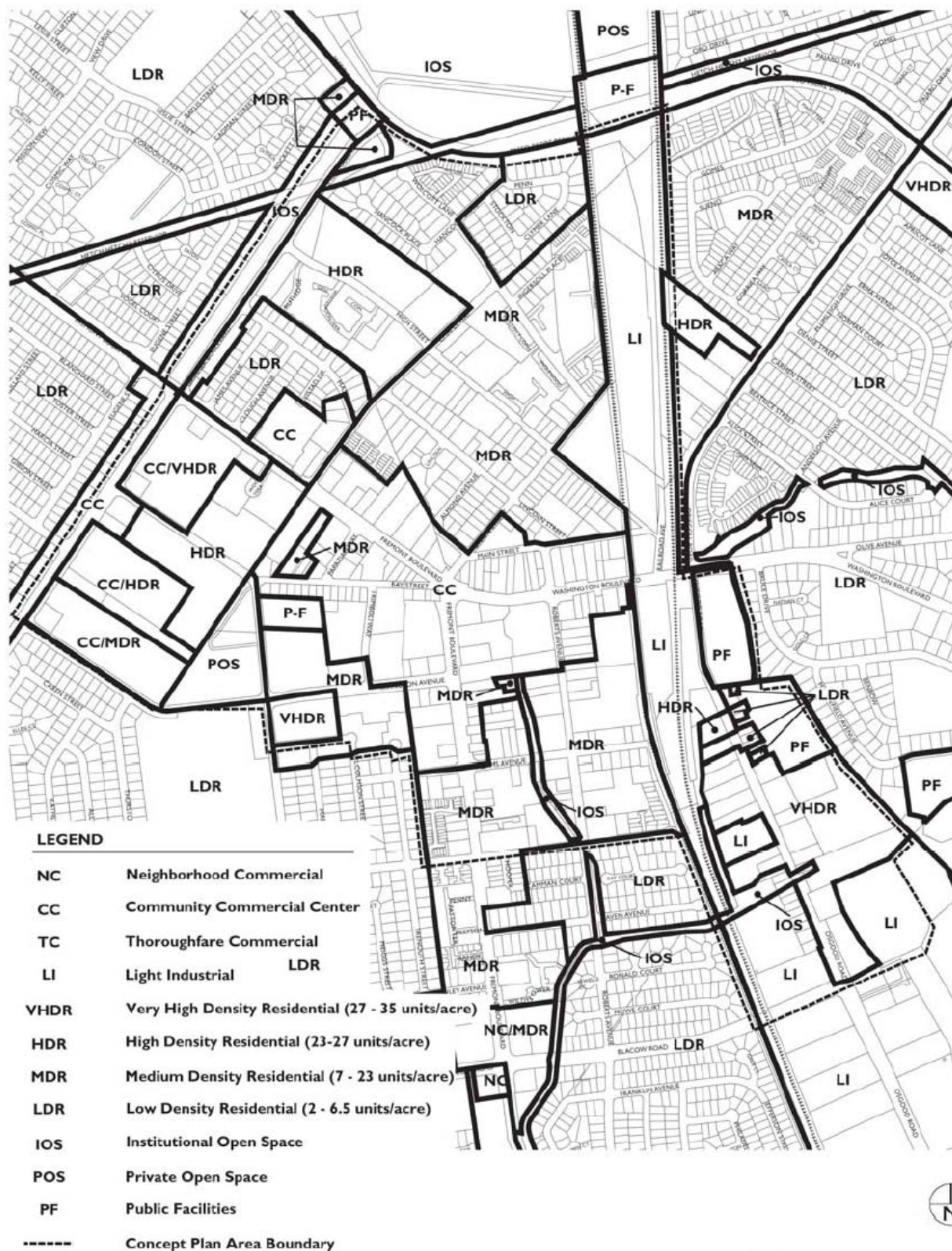


Figure 1-1. General Plan Designations



